

As part of America's contribution to this international effort, today I am announcing \$1 billion in additional economic assistance to meet Georgia's humanitarian needs and to support its economic recovery. More than half of these funds will be made available in the near term and will support reconstruction efforts in Georgia, assist the Government of Georgia in leading the nation's recovery, and meet ongoing humanitarian needs, including the resettlement of displaced families. The balance of the funds, together with assistance from the European Union and other partners, will help the Government of Georgia rebuild critical infrastructure and help local communities and businesses get back on their feet. My administration looks forward to working with Congress on elements of this package. The Vice President will brief Georgia's leadership on this package when he visits Tbilisi tomorrow.

Today I have also directed a number of Federal agencies to expand their support for Georgia's economic recovery. U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab will take steps to expand trade and investment in Georgia, by negotiating an enhanced bilateral investment treaty and expanding preferential access to the U.S. market for Georgian exports. Secretary of Commerce Gutierrez will assist U.S. firms interested in trade and investment in Georgia and dispatch a trade mission to Georgia in the coming weeks. Secretary of Transportation Peters will make available risk insurance to support U.S. maritime commerce with Georgia. Secretary of the Treasury Paulson will continue to lead our efforts to coordinate assistance efforts with international financial institutions, and Secretaries Rice and Gates will continue to coordinate with our international partners to ensure that our aid is delivered swiftly to those who need it most.

Georgia has a strong economic foundation and leaders with an impressive record of reform. Our additional economic assistance will help the people of Georgia recover from the

assault on their country and continue to build a prosperous and competitive economy.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Proclamation 8285—National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, 2008

September 3, 2008

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are helping to extend lifelines of learning throughout our country. During Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, we pay tribute to these distinguished institutions.

Our Nation's HBCUs help unlock the great potential within students by providing quality higher education to traditionally underserved communities. By offering all students an opportunity to develop their skills and talents, HBCUs are helping more Americans realize the promise of our Nation.

My Administration is committed to promoting equal opportunities and access to higher education for all students. Since 2001, funding for HBCUs and Historically Black Graduate Institutions has increased. Additionally, the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 makes college more affordable for low-income students by increasing funding for Federal Pell Grants by more than \$11 billion. The Act also helps HBCUs increase educational opportunities in the critical fields of math, science, technology, and foreign languages. By educating all of America's students, we are investing in our next generation of leaders and contributing to a more hopeful people and a more prosperous America.

Throughout this week, we renew the call for this country to never rest until equality is real, opportunity is universal, and all citizens can realize their dreams. We also recognize our country's HBCUs and their important role in making these goals a reality.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 7 through September 13, 2008, as National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities in respect and appreciation for the contributions these valuable institutions and their graduates have made to our country.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 4, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 5.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 30

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Governor

Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Governor Bob Riley of Alabama, and Governor Rick Perry of Texas to discuss Hurricane Gustav. He then had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President was briefed on Hurricane Gustav and Federal and State disaster response preparations.

The President declared an emergency in Mississippi and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Gustav beginning on August 28 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Gustav beginning on August 29 and continuing.

August 31

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy to discuss the situation in Georgia. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA, to discuss Hurricane Gustav.

September 1

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to Austin, TX. While en route aboard Air Force One, he was briefed on Hurricane Gustav by Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator R. David Paulison.

Later in the morning, at the Texas Emergency Operations Center, he met with emergency operations center employees.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to San Antonio, TX. Then, at the Alamo Regional Command Reception Center at Lackland Air Force Base, he met with military personnel and Red Cross volunteers. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.